# CV

*Experienced senior leader with a proven track record of driving digital transformation and scaling global teams. I've led digital strategy and innovation initiatives across corporate and startup environments, delivering significant revenue growth, launching market-leading products, and leveraging cutting-edge technologies like AI, blockchain, and cloud. My expertise spans product innovation, strategic portfolio management, and working with C-level executives on cross-divisional, international projects. I am seeking to leverage my strategic insight in a role that drives corporate-wide digital strategies and transformation.*

## Personal Information

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|---|---|
| Name: | Bernhard Hecker |
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| Nationality: | German |

## Professional Experience

**06.2023 – 06/2024**

**Pluxee (Germany and Austria)**

<u>CPO & CMO Germany/Austria (Interim)</u>

- *Formerly Sodexo Benefits and Reward Services*
- *Service provider for employee benefits, incentives, and recognition programs*
- *EUR 50 million in revenue, 300 employees (in A and D)*
- *Subsidiary of Sodexo Group*
- *Company Ownership: Sodexo Public / Pluxee listed since 2024*

- Led the rebranding from Sodexo Benefits to Pluxee, aligning strategy with a global spin-off and preparing for a 2024 IPO.
- Directed the development and launch of a new consumer app (iOS & Android), achieving a 500% revenue growth target in small business.
- Drove digital transformation initiatives, fostering high digital adoption and compliance with privacy regulations for global market entry.
- Developed a sustainable product vision, consolidating offerings and ensuring readiness for fast-paced IPO.

**02.2022 – 06.2023**

**Sympa OY, Helsinki (Finnland)**

<u>Vice President Product Management (Interim)</u>

- *HR software provider / SaaS-based platform*
- *EUR 45 million in revenue, 200 employees*
- *In private equity ownership (PSG Equity)*

- Restructured the product management team, resulting in a 49% revenue growth and a 120% increase in platform performance.
- Managed cross-functional teams and product integrations (Recruitee and Javelo), driving international expansion.
- Developed machine learning (ML) and AI-powered functionalities, improving platform stability (99% uptime).

**05/2021 – 10/2022**

**SUSE Software Solutions Germany GmbH, Nuremberg**

<u>Head of Public Affairs (Interim)</u>

- *Provider of open-source software (known for SUSE Linux)*

# Bernhard Hecker

- *EUR 450 million in revenue, 2,200 employees*
- *Listed since 2021 / Subsidiary of SUSE SE (Luxembourg)*

- Positioned SUSE as a leader in sustainable software development, influencing policy through the Gaia-X project.
- Contributed to securing EUR 7 million in funding for IPCEI-CIS, positioning SUSE in regulatory discussions on European digital sovereignty.

**01/2020 – 01/2021**   **Virtual Solution AG, Munich**
<u>Chief Innovation Officer (Interim)</u>
- *Manufacturer of mobile apps for secure communication for governments*
- *Approx. EUR 30 million in revenue, 90 employees*
- *After takeover by Materna Group in 2022: Materna Virtual Solution GmbH*
- *In private equity ownership*

- Established and led an Innovation Unit, increasing successful product launches by 25% within one year.
- Managed compliance efforts with security and regulatory standards, crucial for government projects (e.g., VS-NfD accreditation).

**03/2018 – 12/2019**   **Cryptowerk Corp., Silicon Valley (USA) / Munich office**
<u>Vice President Business Development Europe</u>
- *Start-up specializing in industrial blockchain applications*
- *Venture Capital financed*

- Drove market entry and expansion in Europe, aligning the product with Germany's national blockchain strategy.
- Managed partnerships with federal authorities, contributing to the Blockchain Strategy for regulatory innovation..

**01/1999 – 01/2018**   **Retarus GmbH, Munich**
- *Global provider of cloud-based services for e-mail, fax, SMS and EDI*
- *EUR 55 million in revenue, 330 employees*
- *In private ownership*
<u>Chief Product Officer (March 2012- January 2018)</u>
- Directed global product management and development, driving the company's growth from EUR 31.6 million to

EUR 46.8 million in annual revenue through innovative product strategies.

- Pioneered AI and machine learning integration, leading the development of AI-powered email security features, which became a cornerstone of Retarus' product portfolio.
- Led international product development teams across multiple regions, managing complex cross-functional projects to ensure successful global deployments and local market adaptations.
- Spearheaded the creation of cloud-based services for enterprise messaging, integrating technologies such as AI-driven spam detection, which significantly improved security and customer satisfaction.
- Played a critical role in reducing time-to-market by 30%, using agile methodologies and data-driven decision making to enhance product innovation and speed of deployment.

Director Product Management March 2009 – March 2012)

- Developed and executed a comprehensive product strategy, resulting in a 15% increase in market share in a highly competitive cloud services sector.
- Launched new services tailored for B2B communications, expanding the product offering and improving customer retention through feature-driven enhancements.
- Collaborated closely with engineering, sales, and customer support teams to align product development with market needs and ensure seamless execution of the product roadmap.

Product Manager (January 1999 – March 2009)

- Tripled revenue during this period by developing innovative B2B communication products, including solutions for email, fax, and SMS services.
- Reduced time-to-market by 30% by optimizing development processes, fostering closer collaboration between product and engineering teams, and streamlining operations.
- Contributed to establishing Retarus as a market leader in secure, cloud-based communication services, growing its presence in North America, Europe, and Asia.

## Product Engagement

- Speaker at product management events, sharing insights on balancing product and technology leadership.
- Active contributor to the product management community, mentoring and writing articles on product management best practices.
- Mentor for founders and startups at UnternehmerTUM, German Accelerator, Founders Foundation, Techstars, and World Economic Forum / Global Shapers Munich.

## Education and Certifications

- Harvard University edX: CS50 Artificial Intelligence with Python (2024)
- Hasso Plattner Institute: Digital Entrepreneurship (2021), Blockchain: Hype or Innovation? (2018)
- German Accelerator Program: Silicon Valley (2017)

## Languages

German          Native
English          Business Fluent